

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sparton Electronics

Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Sparton Improves Response Time, Quality, and Productivity Through Lean Transformation

Client Profile:

Sparton Electronics has provided engineering, manufacturing and technology solutions to the U.S. government, its allies, and their industrial bases for over 100 years. Sparton's products range from sonobuoys operating in severe deep ocean environments, to data links, antennas, power supplies, batteries and acoustic devices. The company employs 380 people at its facility in De Leon Springs, Florida.

Situation:

Sparton recognized that to sustain its success as a pioneer in the industry and to remain competitive in the Government marketplace, they must continually seek ways to maintain a high level of employee involvement in daily operations, strong teamwork and high employee morale. In conjunction with the company's continuous improvement objectives, Sparton made a decision to transform the Government Systems unit into a Lean enterprise in order to improve service to its customers, increase quality and productivity. Sparton contacted the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

Florida MEP worked with Sparton's Business Unit management to develop their strategic direction for operations improvement including the measures needed to assure that they sustain progress on that formulated strategy. The planning/measurement methodology is based on the Balanced Scorecard platform. The strategy was converted into firm tactical plans through the development of Value Stream Maps for chosen products. The maps disclosed the elements of the Value Stream that warranted further actions to be taken by Kaizen blitzes. The Kaizen events were supported by shop and office employee teams who received basic Lean training during Lean Simulation workshops. Kaizen events were performed in 11 shop sections plus warehouse to floor delivery, receiving/inspections and materials. Finally a Kanban controlled system for moving materials from shop section to shop section was formulated and implemented. This final step provided the glue necessary for the warehouse and shop sections to perform as an integrated system.

Results:

- * Reduced lead time by 41 percent.
- * Increased productivity by 26 percent.
- * Reduced Work in Progress by 50 percent.

Testimonial:

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"I could go on for a long time describing all the benefits of implementing a Lean Enterprise as well as the valuable role Florida MEP, and in particular Bart Powell, brought to our journey on becoming Lean. They brought incredible value to our organization."

Mark Madore, Director of Operations